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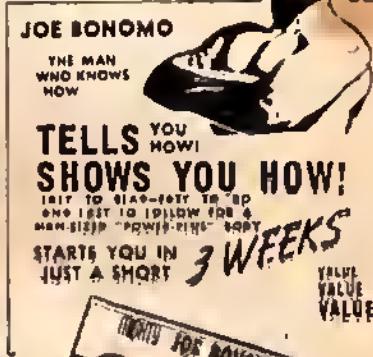
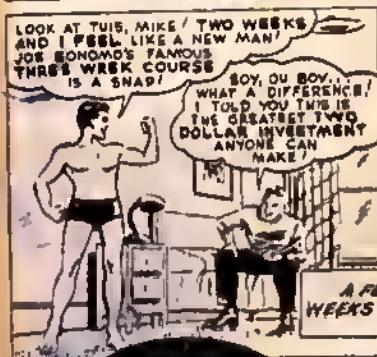
UNCANNY

# MYSTERIES WEIRD <sup>and</sup> STRANGE



The DEVIL'S BIRTHMARK  
CORPSE, COME BACK!  
HAPPILY DEAD  
VAMPIRE TERROR

3 WEEKS AND \$1.98 MADE "SAD SLIM JIM" "HEP!"



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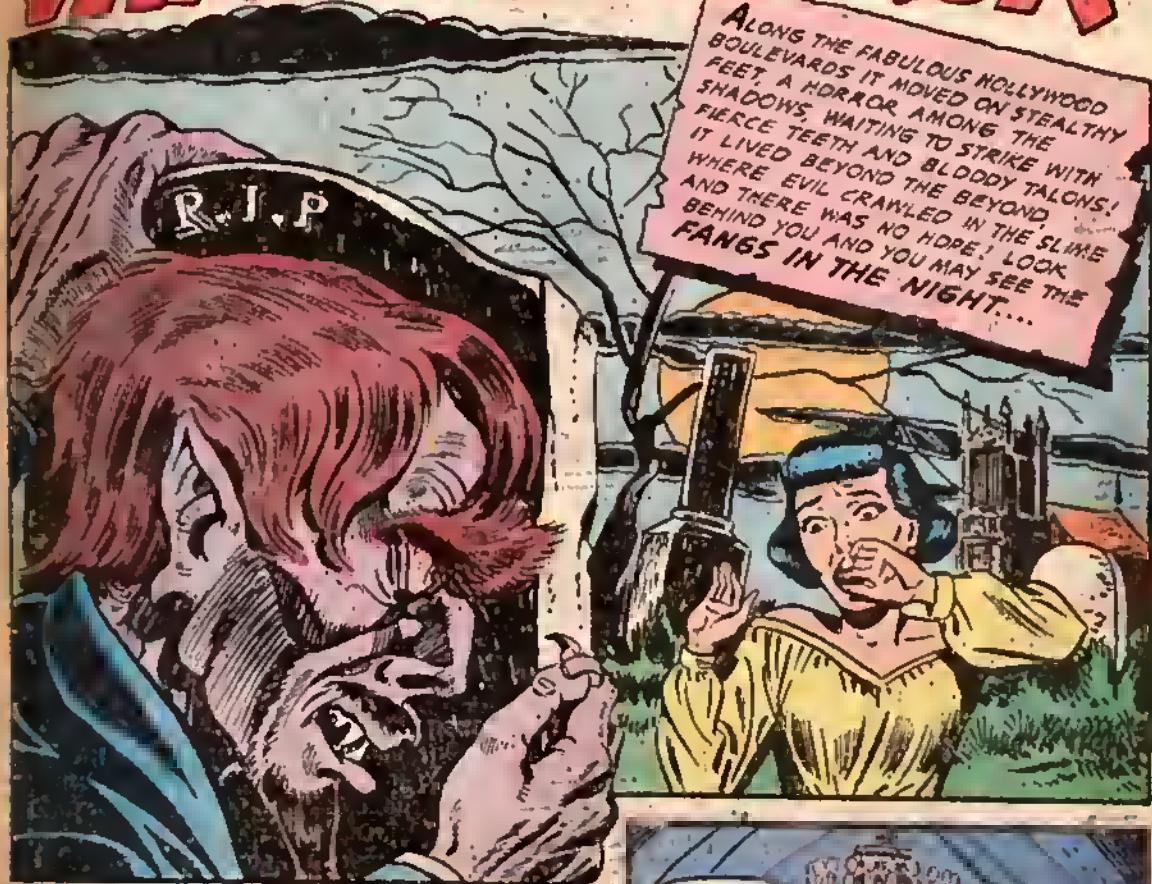
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# VAMPIRE TERROR



IN A SMALL MIDWESTERN TOWN A MOVIE AUDIENCE SITS ENTHRALLED AND TERRIFIED...



AFTER THE HORROR MOVIE ENDS...

OH, DID YOU EVER  
SEE ANYTHING LIKE  
THAT? THAT BORIS  
GOFF SCARES ME--  
BUT HE THRILLS  
ME, TOO!

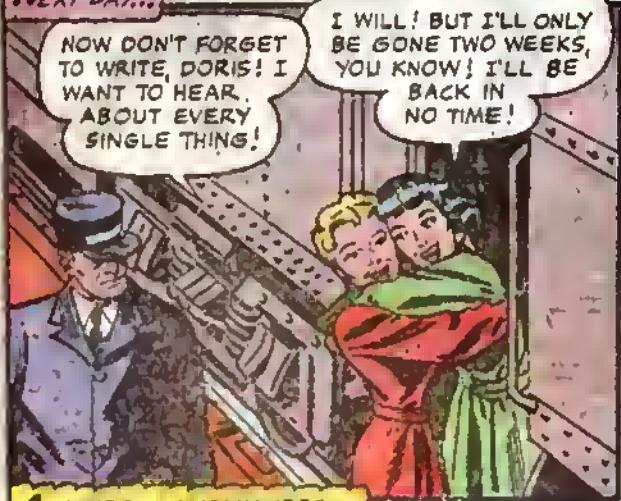
BAH! JUST  
A HAM  
ACTOR!  
YOU  
WOMEN  
MAKE ME  
SICK!



NEXT DAY...

NOW DON'T FORGET  
TO WRITE, DORIS! I  
WANT TO HEAR  
ABOUT EVERY  
SINGLE THING!

I WILL! BUT I'LL ONLY  
BE GONE TWO WEEKS,  
YOU KNOW! I'LL BE  
BACK IN  
NO TIME!



AND SOON IN HOLLYWOOD...

MISS CHANNING? I'M  
GREGORY TAYLOR FROM  
MOVIE STAR MAGAZINE!  
AS A CONTEST WINNER,  
WE'RE GLAD TO  
HAVE YOU IN  
HOLLYWOOD!

T-THANK  
YOU! OH,  
I'M SO  
THRILLED!

DORIS CHANNING AND LYDIA THOMSON, OLD  
FRIENDS, DISCUSS THE PICTURE--AND  
SOMETHING ELSE...

WASN'T IT JUST SWELL,  
DORIS! AND TO THINK  
YOU'RE GOING TO  
HOLLYWOOD TOMORROW!  
WHY, YOU MIGHT EVEN  
MEET BORIS GOFF IN  
PERSON!

NOW, LYDIA,  
JUST BECAUSE  
I WON A TRIP  
TO HOLLYWOOD  
DOESN'T MEAN  
I'LL MEET ANY  
REAL BIG  
STARS!



THAT VERY NIGHT...

GOOD EVENING,  
MISS CHANNING!  
I AM BORIS GOFF!  
I HOPE YOU'RE  
ENJOYING  
THE PARTY!

OH! IT REALLY  
IS YOU! BORIS  
GOFF! OH--WAIT  
UNTIL I TELL  
LYDIA ABOUT  
THIS!



LATER AS SHE WRITES A LETTER TO HER FRIEND...

DEAR LYDIA: I'M JUST THRILLED TO PIECES! GUESS WHAT? I ACTUALLY MET BORIS GOFF AT A PARTY AND--OF ALL THE HEAVENLY THINGS--HE INVITED ME OUT FOR DINNER! OH--I'M IN SUCH A TIZZY THAT I CAN HARDLY WRITE...



THE DRIVE STRETCHES ON AND ON, INTO THE DESOLATE HILLS SURROUNDING LOS ANGELES...

YOU MENTIONED I SEEM TO HAVE A LAKE, BORIS? I LOST MY WAY SOMEHOW! BUT WHY WORRY--THE NIGHT IS TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR THAT!



I'M SORRY, MY DEAR, BUT YOU SEE HOW IT IS! YOU KNOW! SO I CAN'T LET YOU LIVE NOW!



THE NEXT NIGHT...

WELL, DORIS, WHAT DO YOU SAY TO A NICE DRIVE AFTER DINNER? I KNOW A LOVELY SPOT OUT BY THE LAKE!

I--I'D LOVE THAT-- BORIS! OH, IT SEEMS SO FUNNY, ME CALLING YOU BY YOUR FIRST NAME!



FINALLY THEY PARK...

THIS IS DIVINE! BUT TELL ME, BORIS, WHY CAN A HANDSOME, GENTLE MAN LIKE YOU PLAY SUCH MONSTERS ON THE SCREEN? VAMPIRES AND SUCH?



VERY SIMPLE, MY DEAR! LOOK AT ME!

I PLAY THEM NATURALLY BECAUSE--- I AM A VAMPIRE!

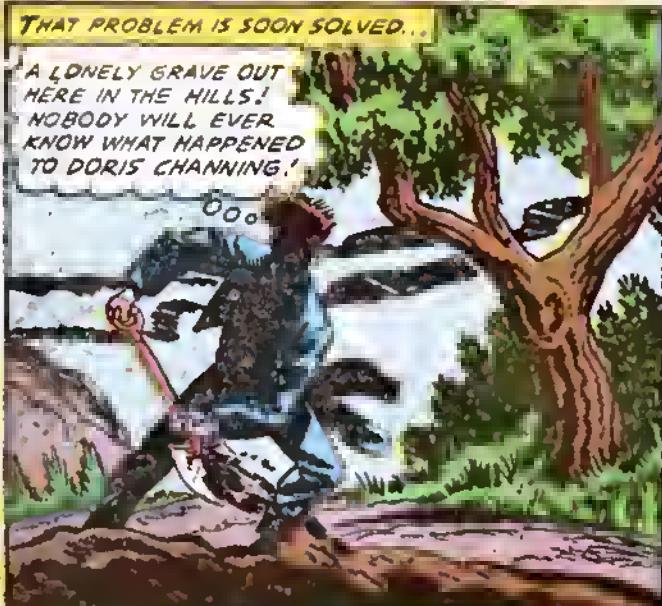


THERE, BORIS, YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN! LET YOUR EVIL SELF TAKE OVER! BUT THE LUST, THE THIRST, WAS TOO GREAT! NOW WHAT TO DO WITH HER BODY?



THAT PROBLEM IS SOON SOLVED...

A LONELY GRAVE OUT  
HERE IN THE HILLS!  
NOBODY WILL EVER  
KNOW WHAT HAPPENED  
TO DORIS CHANNING!



BUT I MUST BE VERY  
CAREFUL! IF THE GIRL IS  
MISSED--BUT SHE WON'T  
BE, OF COURSE! THEY  
WILL SIMPLY ASSUME  
THAT SHE HAS  
GONE BACK HOME!



FOR DAYS  
HE WATCHES  
THE PAPERS...

JUST AS I THOUGHT! SHE  
WAS JUST A LITTLE NOBODY  
AND SHE'S DROPPED OUT  
OF SIGHT! NO ONE  
CARES! I'M SAFE  
ENOUGH!



SO ONCE AGAIN, ON A DARK NIGHT, HIS  
EVIL NATURE WINS OUT...

CARE FOR A  
RIDE, MISS? I  
SEEM TO BE  
GOING YOUR  
WAY!

OH, THANK YOU!  
SAY, AREN'T YOU  
BORIS GOFF, THE  
BIG MOVIE  
STAR?



AND ON STILL ANOTHER NIGHT HE STRIKES  
AGAIN...

YES, I AM  
BORIS GOFF!  
MOVIE STAR BY  
PROFESSION--  
VAMPIRE BY  
PREFERENCE!



EEEERRRR!  
I'M TAKING TOO  
MANY CHANCES, BUT  
I CAN'T HELP IT!  
I MUST DO THIS--  
I MUST!



BUT ONE NIGHT A FEW WEEKS LATER, BORIS GOFF GETS A TASTY SHOCK...

YES, YOUNG LADY? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU? WHO ARE YOU?

I'M LYDIA THOMSON, A FRIEND OF DORIS CHANNING. I-- I WONDERED IF YOU COULD TELL ME HOW TO FIND HER?

INSIDE

YOU SEE, MR. GOFF--DORIS WROTE ME THAT SHE HAD BEEN SEEING YOU! BUT SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO HER, I'M GOT TO

WELL, I WONDERED...

HMM...

I SEE!

SO... DORIS COULD CAUSE TROUBLE!

AS A MATTER OF FACT, MY DEAR, I DO KNOW WHERE YOUR FRIEND IS! I PROMISED TO TELL NO ONE, BUT SINCE YOU'RE HER OLDEST FRIEND, THE TRUTH IS THAT SHE, ER, SHE HAD A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN AND IS IN AN INSTITUTION!

HOW

TERRIBLE!

CAN YOU TAKE ME TO HER AT ONCE?

LATER... IT--IT'S AWFULLY LONELY OUT HERE, MR. GOFF! ARE YOU S-SURE THIS IS THE WAY TO THE SANITARIUM?

OF COURSE! ONLY THERE IS SOME-THING ELSE I MUST SHOW YOU FIRST!

SOON... JUST OVER THIS WAY, MY DEAR! DORIS AND I PICNICKED HERE ONCE AND SHE ASKED ME TO LOOK FOR A BRACELET SHE LOST!

A BRACELET! I... I DON'T THINK I WANT TO GO ON, MR. GOFF! PLEASE-- TAKE ME HOME AT ONCE!

TOO LATE, MY GIRL! YOU WANTED TO FIND DORIS--WELL, THERE SHE IS! DEEP IN THIS GRAVE!

S-GRAVE! YOU MEAN-- OHHHHH!

SO NOW YOU KNOW! WHAT SHE KNEW! AND SO YOU HAVE TO GO THE WAY SHE DID!

NO PLEASE! EEEEEEE!

IN A FEW MINUTES IT IS ALL OVER...

HAH--  
AGAIN I'VE SLAKED  
MY EVIL NATURE!  
HAN-HAH! IT  
WAS SO EASY  
THIS TIME!

I'LL JUST BURY HER  
HERE BESIDE THE OTHER  
GIRL AND NOBODY WILL  
EVER BE THE WISER!  
LUCKY SHE CAME TO ME  
BEFORE SHE WENT TO  
THE POLICE!

WHAT HE DOES NOT SEE IS THE TERRIBLE HAND  
RISING FROM THE GRAVE  
BEHIND HIM...

THERE,  
PRACTICALLY DONE! SLEEP  
WELL AND LONG, LITTLE  
DORIS AND LYDIA! NO ONE  
WILL EVER KNOW WHAT--  
HUH! I THOUGHT I HEARD  
SOMETHING...

HEE-HEE  
HEE!

YOWWW--DORIS! B-BUT  
IT CAN'T-- Y-YOU'RE  
DEAD!

YOU SHOULD  
KNOW! HEE--  
HEE! YOU  
KILLED ME!  
BUT SOME-  
TIMES THE  
DEAD CAN  
COME  
BACK!

TO AVENGE A  
TERRIBLE CRIME!  
THAT'S WHY I'M  
HERE, BORIS  
COFF!

GAAAA!  
STAY  
AWAY!

NO USE TRYING TO  
GET AWAY, YOU FILTHY  
VAMPIRE! YOU'RE  
DONE! I'LL GET  
YOU NO MATTER  
WHERE YOU GO!

YIIIIIIII-- I  
CAN'T FIGHT  
A THING  
FROM THE  
GRAVE!

TERRIED BY AN EVIL  
EVER GREATER  
THAN HIS OWN, THE  
VAMPIRE  
TRIES TO  
FLEE! BUT  
HE  
STUMBLERS  
AND...

HEE-HEE-HEE!  
RUN! SEE WHAT  
GOOD IT DOES!  
HO-HO-HO!  
YOU'RE  
FINISHED!

NO, YOU  
WON'T! I-  
GAAAAA,  
FALLING...

THE STAKE, MY  
HEART! I'LL DIE  
FOREVER NOW-  
!UNHHHHH!



# CORPSE, Come Back!

IN THE DARKEST HOURS OF THE NIGHT, WHEN TERROR PROWLED STEALTHILY AROUND THE GRAVES, THIS MAN CAME TO DO HIS EVIL WORK! FOR TO HIS EBRIE COMMANDS, THE DEAD ROSE AND OBEYED HIS ORDERS! HE WAS KING OF THE GRAVEYARD...



A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT AS A SINISTER FIGURE ENTERS A LONELY GRAVEYARD...

I'LL SOON KNOW IF MY THEORY WILL WORK! ALL I NEED FOR THE TEST IS ONE FRESH CORPSE!



A NEW GRAVE, JUST FILLED IN TODAY! THIS ONE SHOULD (CHUCKLE) BE FRESH ENOUGH!



WHEN THE GRUESOME TASK IS DONE...

FINE--FINE! JUST WHAT I  
NEED FOR MY EXPERIMENT!  
BUT NOW TO GET IT OUT  
OF HERE...



SUDDENLY...

HEY, YOU THERE!  
ROBBING  
GRAVES, HUH!  
STOP!

HUH! THE  
CARETAKER! IF  
HE RECOGNIZES  
ME...



BUT HE TAKES NO CHANCES...

I CAN USE ANOTHER BODY!  
TWO CORPSES ARE (HEE-HEE)  
ALWAYS BETTER THAN  
ONE!

YAAAAAA!



MOMENTS LATER...

THERE! ALL SNUG IN  
THE CAR. NOW FOR  
HOME AND MY  
LABORATORY!



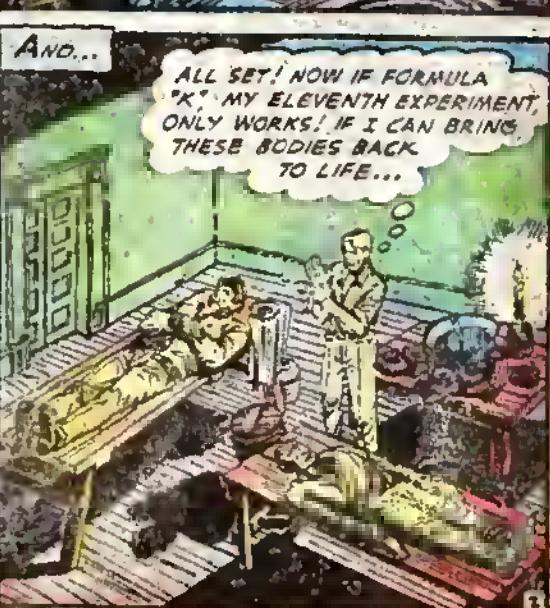
HALF AN HOUR LATER, IN A DESOLATE AREA...

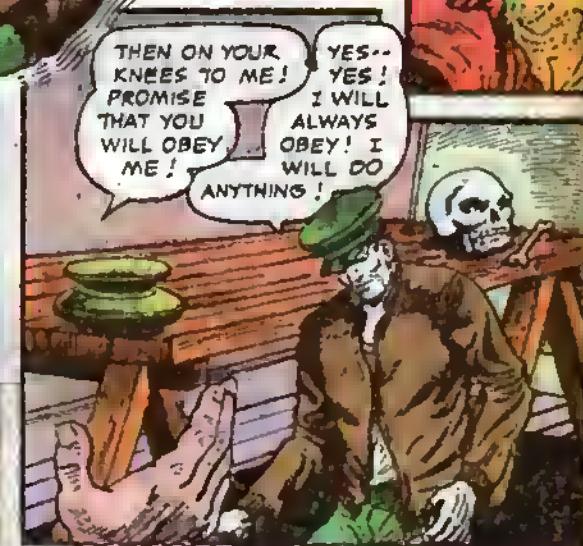
TONIGHT SHOULD BE THE NIGHT! I'VE TRIED  
AND FAILED SO OFTEN--SURELY TONIGHT I  
MUST BE SUCCESSFUL!



AND...

ALL SET! NOW IF FORMULA  
"X", MY ELEVENTH EXPERIMENT,  
ONLY WORKS! IF I CAN BRING  
THESE BODIES BACK  
TO LIFE...





THEN ON YOUR KNEES TO ME! YES--  
PROMISE THAT YOU WILL OBEY ME!

YES! I WILL  
ALWAYS  
OBEY! I  
WILL DO  
ANYTHING!



YOU WILL FIND OUT IN DUE TIME! MEANTIME YOU WILL DO NOTHING BUT WAIT-- WAIT UNTIL I FIND WORK FOR YOU TO DO!

I ALSO HEARD, MASTER! AND I AM YOUR SLAVE, TOO! I WILL OBEY YOU!

GOOO--GOOO! FORMULA "K" IS A COMPLETE SUCCESS! AND SOON, WHEN I HAVE MORE CORPSES, I WILL HAVE MORE OF YOU!



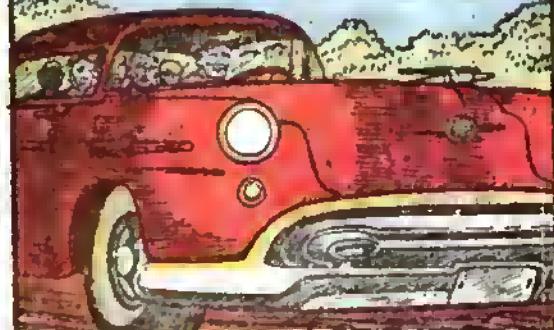
TIME PASSES AND HE ACQUIRES MORE BODIES! BUT HE BIDES HIS TIME, FOR THERE IS NO HURRY...

WAH-NAH... KEEP THEM BUSY! SUCH TASKS KEEP THEM DISCIPLINED AND OBEDIENT UNTIL I AM READY TO STRIKE!



UNTIL AT LAST...

TONIGHT, MY FRIENDS, YOU BEGIN TO EARN YOUR KEEP! I HAVE A TASK FOR YOU--A VERY EASY TASK! BUT IT MUST BE DONE JUST RIGHT!



THEY REACH A BANK IN A SMALL TOWN...

WE KNOW WHAT TO DO, MASTER! THE JOB IS AN EASY ONE!

THERE! NOW GET TO WORK! YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS! AND DON'T BUNGLE!



AS A TERRIFIED WATCHMAN FIRES IN VAIN...

THREE--C CAN'T STOP THEM! 8-BULLETS DON'T HAVE ANY EFFECT!

FOOL! WE HAVE ALREADY DIED ONCE!

YOU CANNOT KILL US AGAIN!



WORKING LIKE THE MACHINES THEY ARE, THE LIVING DEAD PLACE CHARGES AND BLAST THE BANK DOOR...

IT IS DONE! NOW INSIDE!

GOOD--GOOD! NOW THE MONEY-- AND LOOK OUT FOR THE WATCHMAN!

WE FEAR NO BULLETS!



AND SECONDS LATER THE DOOR OF THE VAULT IS BLASTED TO BITS...

GOOD WORK, MEN! NOW GET IN THERE AND SCOOP UP THE MONEY! TAKE IT TO THE CAR! HURRY!



SOON...

THAT'S THE LAST OF IT!  
NOW, COME ON, ALL OF  
YOU! THAT DOOR MUST  
HAVE BEEN WIRED AND  
THE COPS WILL BE HERE  
ANY MINUTE!



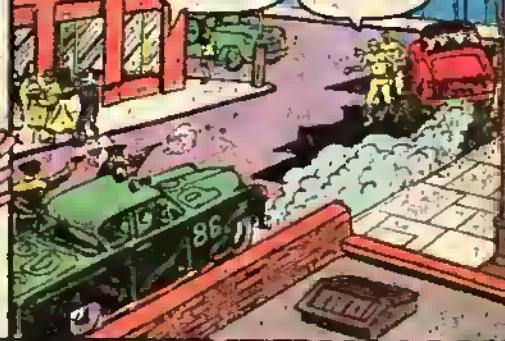
TOO LATE! THE POLICE ARE ALREADY THERE...

STOP, YOU  
GOONS! BETTER  
SURRENDER!

GET THEM, QUICK! KILL  
THEM SO WE'LL HAVE  
TIME FOR A  
GETAWAY!

WE'LL FILL  
YOU FULL OF  
HOLES!

WE  
WILL,  
MASTER!



YOU  
DIE,  
POLICE-  
MAN!

WE'LL KILL  
YOU WITH  
OUR  
BARE  
HANDS!

YOWW!  
C-CAN'T  
STOP  
THEM!



BUT AS THE ROBBERS SPEED  
AWAY ANOTHER POLICE CAR  
PICKS UP THEIR TRAIL...

HANG ON, I'M  
GOING TO TAKE  
THE NEXT  
CORNER  
FAST!

SHOOT AT THE  
TIRES, MIKE!  
IT'S THE ONLY  
WAY WE'LL EVER  
STOP THEM!



THE CRAZY CHASE GOES ON! SUDDENLY, THE EVIL  
GENIUS, WITH HIS CARSO OF LIVING DEAD MEN,  
WHIRLS INTO A NARROW STREET...

WE'VE GOT TO LOSE  
THEM NOW! OUR  
LAST CHANCE...



AND THE POLICE CAR SKIDS, GOES OUT OF  
CONTROL, AND CRASHES INTO A LAMP-  
POST...

YAAAAA!  
I'M HURT  
BAD!

GAAAAA!  
--MY HEAD!

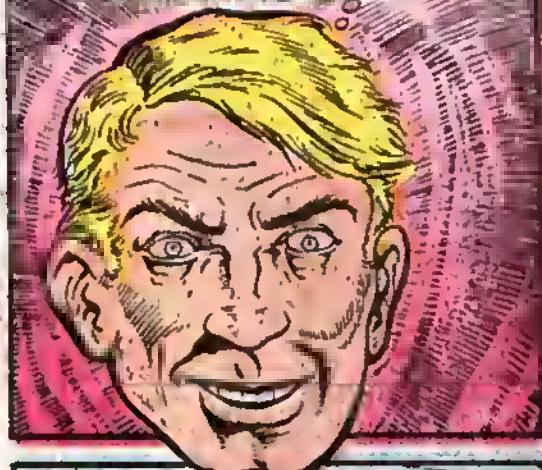


THE PASSES AND HIS EVIL SCHEMES PROSPER,  
BUT WALKING CORPSES AS HIS SERVANTS, HE  
CAN DO ANYTHING! BUT NOW THAT HE HAS ALL  
THE MONEY HE NEEDS...

"YOU—ALEXI GORDON, THE MOVIE STAR!  
A LOVELY WOMAN! AND SHE'S IN TOWN,  
AT THE AJAX HOTEL!"



"I'VE NEVER HAD A WOMAN LIKE HER! BUT  
NOW, WITH MY POWER, WHY NOT? ALL I  
HAVE TO DO IS GIVE THE ORDER TO  
ONE OF MY MEN AND..."



"SO... THERE IS THE  
CITY AND YOU KNOW  
WHAT TO DO! REMEMBER--  
YOU ARE TO BRING HER TO  
ME UNARMED!"

"I UNDERSTAND,  
MASTER!"



"AN EASY TASK MY MASTER  
GAVE ME THIS TIME! TO  
FIND A WEAK GIRL AND  
KIDNAP HER IS  
NOTHING!"



HE FINDS THE ROOM WITHOUT DIFFICULTY! TO  
HER MISFORTUNE, ALEXI GORDON IS IN...

"YOU COME WITH ME, LADY!  
NO SCREAM! MY MASTER  
WANTS YOU!"

"EEEEEEE!"



"I SAY NOT TO FIGHT,  
LADY! MASTER DOES  
NOT WANT YOU  
TO BE HURT!"

"OHHHHH-  
AGHHHHH!"



TOO SUDENLY THE STRUGGLE IS OVER...

S-SHE'S DEAD! I KILLED HER! MY MASTER WILL BE VERY ANGRY WITH ME FOR THIS!

MINUTES LATER...

HERE SHE IS, MASTER! BUT SOMETHING WENT WRONG! SHE FOUGHT LIKE A WILDCAT AND...

WHAT? YOU FOOL-- IF YOU'VE HARMED HER I'LL SEND YOU BACK TO YOUR GRAVE!



BUT THE GIRL IS DEAD! INSANE WITH RAGE, THE FRUSTRATED MAN SMASHES HIS FIST INTO THE SERVANT'S FACE...

BLIND, STUPID FOOL! PIG! WHAT GOOD IS A DEAD GIRL TO ME? I HAVE ENOUGH OF YOU DEAD ONES AROUND ME NOW!



BUT WAIT A MINUTE! HMM--WHY NOT! I BROUGHT THE OTHERS BACK WITH FORMULA "K," WHY NOT THE GIRL! AND THEN SHE'LL BE COMPLETELY IN MY POWER, THE WAY THEY ARE!



SO THE GIRL IS TAKEN TO THE LONELY OLD HOUSE WITH THE OTHER WALKING CORPSES...

THEIR! I'VE INJECTED FORMULA "K" INTO HER VEINS! SHE SHOULD COME BACK TO LIFE VERY SOON--AND BE MY ABSOLUTE SLAVE!



SURE ENOUGH...

I LIVE AGAIN, MASTER! I AM YOUR SLAVE! WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO TO PROVE MY LOYALTY?

COME HERE, ALEXI! KISS ME!

YOU UNDERSTAND THAT FROM NOW ON YOU MUST OBEY ME WITHOUT QUESTION?

I DO UNDERSTAND! I WILL OBEY!



SO THAT HE HAS EVERYTHING HE WANTS, THE EVIL  
MAD-MASTER DECIDES TO RID HIMSELF OF HIS  
WELL-SERVANTS...

BACK TO  
THE GRAVE WITH YOU! I DO NOT  
SEE YOU NOW! GO AND RETURN  
TO THE WET EARTH AND  
THE WORMS! YOUR OLD  
COFFINS AWAITS YOU!

HAVE MERCY! WE  
ENJOY BEING AS  
WE ARE! THE GRAVE  
IS SO COOL!

DO YOU DARE QUESTION MY COMMANDS?  
SO, I SAY! ALL BUT THE  
GIRL! BACK--BACK TO  
THE GRAVEYARD!

WE MUST  
OBEY YOU,  
MASTER!

BUT I  
YOU ARE  
CRUEL! WE  
HAVE SERVED  
YOU WELL!



SO AS A BLOWY WIND SWEPS THE NIGHT, A  
BEG-Escape PROCESSION MAKES ITS WAY TO  
THE CEMETERY...

WE SUFFER! IF ONLY WE  
COULD WAKE HIM  
SUFFER ALSO!

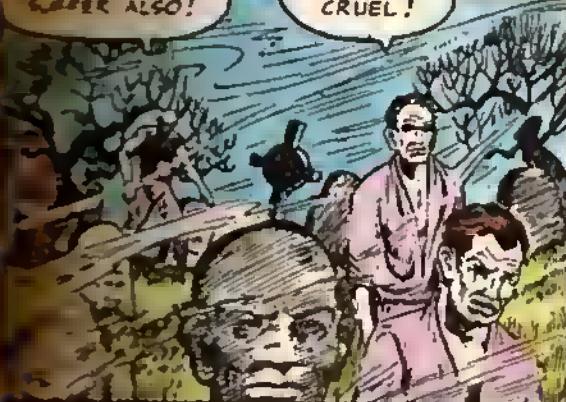
BRR--ALREADY I FEEL  
THE WORMS IN ME! THIS  
IS CRUEL--  
CRUEL!



WHILE BACK IN THE HOUSE...

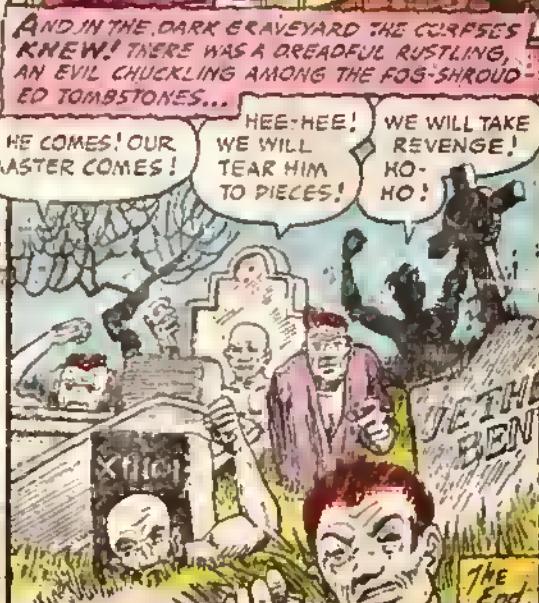
NOW, ALEXI, AS FOR YOU  
AND ME, WE'LL--WHAT  
HAVE YOU GOT BEHIND  
YOU, ALEXI?

YOU WILL  
SEE IN A  
MOMENT,  
MASTER!



YOU ARE, TOO! THERE IS A LITTLE OF  
MY MIND THAT YOU DO NOT CONTROL--  
AND IT GIVES ME JUST ENOUGH  
STRENGTH TO DO THIS! SO--WE  
WILL ALL ROT TOGETHER IN  
THE GRAVE--  
YARD!

NO, YOU CAN'T--  
YAAAAAAA!



HE COMES! OUR  
MASTER COMES!

HEE-HEE!  
WE WILL  
TEAR HIM  
TO PIECES!

WE WILL TAKE  
REVENGE!  
HO-  
HO!

The  
End

# DEATH'S DARK CHAMBER

By JOHN MARTIN

AT THE county line the dark, timbered mine country began. But it was not like anything Sam Wade had ever seen. Mine country was open, with slashed timber extending as far as the eye could see, for open cuts.

A darker, drearier light seemed to rest on this landscape like a dank weight. Far to the west, the ragged edge of a thunderstorm rumbled. Lightning winked fitfully.

Wade cursed. Night was coming on fast. He'd started from Bremersburg in central Pennsylvania in plenty of time to make the old abandoned mine of which the ancient wreck in the seat beside him had talked about. Savagely, slowing the car, he shook the man awake.

"Thought you told me the roads hereabouts were good?" he grumbled.

"Hey? Oh—yeah, mister," said the other, coming out of his drunken sleep. "Tell anybody anything they want to hear for a drink. Local custom: Hey!" Hermann Todt sat bolt upright in the seat, stared wildly round him at the ever-darkening skies, the wasteland of writhing, tortured trees. "Where we at now, mister? I never said I'd come out this far!" Todt shuddered. "Not even for a drink."

"So everything you told me was a lie," Wade grated, cursing himself for wasting a whole bottle of booze on Todt.

"Just—just about the roads," Todt said, trembling. "There is an old abandoned mine out long here. How—how'd I get here?"

"Your own fault," Wade said. "Drank too much. When I asked you to guide me out here, you said you would. Then you fell asleep in the car."

"Musta been crazy," Todt mumbled. "No man in his right mind would come out here—not long this road. There's things here, mister, things that ain't healthy, nohow!"

Wade snorted. Now that he knew the mine really existed he was content just to reach it, look the ground over. A stock promoter of uncertain reputation, almost broke, he'd got the idea of selling mine stock based on a real mine. It would be phony, of course, but the mine would be there and, while he was collecting the dough, any of the suckers could go see the pit. By that time, he knew, he'd be well on his way to South Africa and independence.

Wade chuckled deep in his throat.

"Bad country, mister," Todt said. "Bad. That's why it ain't settled down. That's why

the mine's abandoned. Plenty o' coal, there but."

"But what?" Wade asked. The road was getting bumpier. On both sides the trees closed in like a dim tunnel. And now rain began to fall. Overhead, thunder roared closer.

TODT OPENED his mouth to reply, but shut it. "Todt, you're a superstitious fool!" Wade grunted. "I always thought you Pennsylvania Dutch crazy as woodticks. Houses painted with hex signs! Barns dedicated with prayers against evil. Faugh!"

"Evil's all round in this world," Todt mumbled. "Specially here. You think the folk round here are crazy, hey? You think they raised those hex signs and spoke prayers against *nothin'*." Suddenly he burst into a mad laugh. "Look, mister, maybe you ain't afraid. I'm smarter. When a mine, a whole mess of countryside, is abandoned, let go to seed, there's reasons! All I say is, let's get there—and *get back*!"

Ahead, over the top of the swaying trees, Wade could see, now, the old winding head of the mine. The car shot up a slope and emerged suddenly into a wide, open space atop the rise. Ruined, wooden building formed three sides of a square around the winding head. The pit itself loomed in the middle distance, with the wooden elevator cage suspended above it.

Wade stopped the car, got out. Again Todt laughed crazily.

"Look it them coal bunkers!" he wheezed. "Full. Mine's full o' coal, too. You don't leave a mine like this, less things get bad, mister."

For the first time a chill went through Wade. True enough, he thought. The mine had been abandoned fast—too fast. Rusty tools strewn the ground.

"They was fools!" Todt muttered. "They never paint hex signs!"

Impatient, as the rain began falling more heavily, Wade drew him toward the elevator cage.

"Come in here," he said. "Out of the rain I want to sketch the layout of this place."

Beneath him the cage swayed as he stepped in, ahead of Todt. Wade stared at the pile of flares and dynamite sticks in corner of the cage. He wondered why the miners had left it behind. Had they, as the crazy Todt seemed to think, really been frightened?

the cage bucked. Above them, shrieked.

"Goit!" Todt screamed, as the bolt struck the base of the winding tower. The cage began to sink; faster, faster.

"hit the gear-box," Wade muttered. Wade shook with terror as the dank, pit walls slid by. Then, re-acting rapidly, Todt seized the control lever, up to 'safety'. The fall slowed. With a bump they came to rest at the

Hundred fifty feet down," Todt stammered, staring into darkness. He struck a flare. In his hands it trembled, throwing a flaring cone of light ahead in a coal-seamed tunnel.

"You seem to know a lot about this," Wade said hoarsely.

"I was here the—the day . . ." Todt's failed. His eyes were suffused with tears. Wade glanced at him sharply. Todt looked like a man who knew he must say something in his mind, because, if he did, he would go mad.

"The elevator out of commission, they trapped. Wade knew.

"How about blasting our way out?" he asked.

"Yes, ya," Todt agreed. "We cannot climb. There are two tunnels up. One will take us to blast; the other only a few minutes. Take the longer one."

"Why?" Wade probed.

"The shorter tunnel—it is bad," Todt ered. "It is bricked up at both ends. Had to brick them up when—when . . ."

He fell silent, his tongue working dly.

"We'll take the shurler tunnel," Wade decisively. "We can't breathe this air more than an hour." He knew he had to command, soothe the whiskey-sodden man. It was the only way to safety, he knew, before Todt's mind fell into some abyss of madness.

They walked ahead, Todt glancing back, his face, from time to time, at Wade, who walked behind. Suddenly the ground shook. Todt halted, his knees trembling.

"Get going!" Wade barked. "You know why. Even I know mine cuts sometime a little! Get going, Todt, or . . ."

T

He looked at him for a moment, then shrugged, but the look of horror did not leave out of his eyes. He stumbled on, leading, carrying a flare, while Wade told 'share

flares and some sticks of dynamite. Presently, after many twists and turns in the damp tunnels, they came to a bricked-up section of wall. Wade thrust the old man aside, set a stick of dynamite in a crack between two bricks, fixed a fuse. As he set the match, both of them ran back, hiding behind a turn of the tunnel.

The explosion came quickly, reverberating like a thousand cannon shots in the close quarters. Wade pushed forward, through dust and vapour, choking. A jagged hole loomed in the brick-up section of the tunnel wall. Beyond was blackness. Again, under them, the ground shook a little. Wade pushed ahead, dragging Todt with him.

On the other side, both men paused.

From straight ahead, came a stench like the grave. Todt shrank back, screaming suddenly in fear. But Wade only grunted. He knew it could only be the odor of animals that had crawled into the tunnel and died. But again Todt screamed. Wade's eyes jerked ahead, as Todt held up the flare. The promoter's blood froze.

Before them, the blackness moved. And from it came a low, mewing sound. Then, again, the ground shook, the walls bulged. Along the disk of utter black a line split across its middle, like a mouth.

"They bricked it up!" Todt shrieked. "They tried—but it always gets loose!" His mouth working frightfully, he fell back, uttering oaths, making strange hex signs in the death-laden air. Abruptly, Todt jumped backward toward the blasted hole, just as the whole, blast-weakened wall came tumbling down.

Wade, watching, saw the old man's limbs twitch feebly as they protruded from the pile of rubble, then lay still.

Ahead, the blackness stirred again, came on. In the light of the fallen flare, he could see what it was now, what had made the miners run after they had vainly tried to brick it up. It was a black, icy arm of death, a tentacle of some incredible, dark-spawned being of blackness and unknown empty spaces and the fear-filled dreams of the superstitious miners. It filled the whole tunnel, burrowing.

"Todt!" Wade screamed. "Tell me the spells; teach me the hex signs! Todt! Todt! It's coming! Todt!" He clawed in an agony of terror at the dead limbs of the old man. Abruptly, the flare went out, and then the creature of the dark reached him with its strange mouth that smothered, but did not bite; crushed, but did not tear, and made the low, mewing sound as it tasted swift-flowing blood.

# The Devil's Birthmark

AN ANCIENT AND EVIL FORCE CAME DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES, AND, ONE TERRIBLE NIGHT, INTO THE LIFE OF GEOFFREY POWERS! IT WAS THE END FOR HIM, BUT HE KNEW THAT BEFORE HE FACED ETERNITY HE MUST DESTROY THE CREATURE WHO BORE

THE SIGN OF EVIL...



GEOFFREY POWERS, AFTER LONG THOUGHT, MAKES UP HIS MIND! OUTSIDE, THE WIND IS GUSTING AND THE NIGHT IS DREAR—AND INSIDE, TERROR AND DEATH WAIT...

IF I MUST DO IT—I MUST! SO I MIGHT AS WELL NOTIFY THE POLICE NOW!



HELLO, POLICE HEADQUARTERS? THIS IS GEOFFREY POWERS, OF 1410 EOGECOMBE ROAD! I AM GOING TO KILL SOMEONE! YOU HAD BETTER COME AT ONCE! YOU WILL FIND A NOTE EXPLAINING EVERYTHING...



SHE IS A FOUL, UNCLEAN  
CREATURE OF EVIL! SOME-  
ONE SHOULD HAVE  
DESTROYED HER  
LONG AGO!



NOBODY KNOWS HOW  
MANY LIVES SHE HAS  
RUINED DOWN THROUGH  
THE CENTURIES! BUT  
THIS - THIS GOLDEN  
BULLET WILL PUT AN  
END TO HER!



TO THINK THAT AFTER ALL THE  
YEARS - SHE SHOULD RUN INTO  
ME, THE ONE MAN IN NEW YORK  
WHO COULD RECOGNIZE HER!  
BUT HOW COULD SHE  
KNOW...



... THAT I'M AN EXPERT IN  
THINGS SUPERNATURAL! OR  
THAT I'VE DEVOTED  
MY ENTIRE LIFE TO  
THE STUDY OF  
CREATURES  
LIKE HER!



WALKING CALMLY, EH?  
YOU STILL THINK YOU'RE  
SAFE - THAT I WON'T  
KILL YOU? OR THAT  
I CAN'T!

FOOL! I'LL  
DESTROY YOU  
AS I HAVE ALL  
THE OTHERS!



I'LL - OHHHHHHH -  
A G-GOLDEN  
BULLET!

RIGHT! THE ONE  
THING THAT CAN  
KILL YOU! YOU  
THOUGHT I DID  
NOT KNOW! DIE -  
YOU DEMON!



AS SHE LIES ON THE FLOOR, DEAD AT LAST, GEOFFREY POWERS FEELS NO REMORSE, ONLY RELIEF...

IT HAD TO BE DONE! BUT NO ONE WILL UNDERSTAND, OF COURSE! CERTAINLY NOT THE POLICE!



I MUST DESTROY THE BODY COMPLETELY! NOT A TRACE OF HER MUST BE LEFT—EXCEPT POSSIBLY THE BONES!



IN YOU GO! AN END TO YOU AND YOUR EVIL — FOR ALL TIME!



THE BODY WRITHES AND BEGINS TO TURN BLACK — THEN SUDDENLY...

H—HORRIBLE! THE EVIL IN HER DIES HARD!



AND NOW FOR MYSELF — THE STORY IS WRITTEN, AND PLACED WHERE THE POLICE WILL FIND IT!

I HOPE THEY UNDERSTAND, BUT I DOUBT THAT THEY WILL! AND I HAVE NO TASTE FOR A MURDER TRIAL, OR POSSIBLY AN ASYLUM! THIS IS THE BEST WAY OUT FOR ME! SO...



AND WHEN THE COPS ARRIVE, THEY ARE PUZZLED, BY A NOTE LEFT BY GEOFFREY POWERS...

I DON'T GET IT, LIEUTENANT! WHAT'S A DEMON ANYWAY?

I DON'T KNOW— BUT I'VE HEARD OF POWERS! HE WAS SOME KIND OF EXPERT IN OCCULT MATTERS!

HE LEFT QUITE A MANUSCRIPT EXPLAINING WHY HE KILLED A WOMAN AND BURNED THE BODY! SHE WAS THE DEMON IT SEEMS!

HEY—GET A LOAD OF THIS...

THIS IS THE STORY OF SYBIL GOTTFRIED, A DEMON, AS NEARLY AS I CAN TRACE IT! SHE WAS BORN IN THE BLACK FOREST SOMETIME IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

OUT, OUT! LET YOUR WIFE HAVE HER CHILD IN PEACE!

ALL RIGHT, OLD WOMAN! GO TEND HER!

EEEEEEK—THE DEVIL'S BIRTH-MARK!

THE B-BLACK STAR! THIS CHILD IS BORN EVIL—A DEMON! IT MUST BE DESTROYED AT ONCE!

BUT WHEN THE MIDWIFE SAW THE CHILD...



THANK GOODNESS SHE WILL NEVER KNOW SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A MONSTER!

NO! IT IS B-BETTER THAT SHE DIED!



"THAT NIGHT THE FATHER OF THE DEMON CHILD TOOK THE INFANT INTO THE BLACK FOREST..."

"I MUST DO AS IS THE CUSTOM! SHE MUST BE LEFT FOR THE WOLVES TO DEVOUR!"

"THERE! I HAVE OBEYED OUR LAW! HER BLOOD IS NOT ON MY HANOS, STILL SHE WILL NOT LIVE THROUGH THE NIGHT! THE WOLVES WILL COME SOON!"

"BUT INSTEAD THERE CAME A POOR WOODCUTTER, A MERCIFUL MAN..."

"POOR CHILD! THOSE STUPID SUPERSTITIOUS FOOLS LEFT HER TO DIE!"

"BECAUSE OF A CHANCE BIRTHMARK THEY THINK SHE IS A FIEND IN HUMAN FORM! BAH!"

"B—BUT EVEN SO— IF THERE WERE ANY TRUTH IN THE OLD STORY ABOUT SUCH A BIRTHMARK! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! ALL LIES AND SILLY SUPERSTITIONS!"

"I'LL KEEP THE LITTLE GIRL AND BRING HER UP AS MY OWN! I'M NOT AFRAID OF THEIR OLD WIVES' TALES!"

"BUT THE DAY CAME WHEN HE WAS BITTERLY TO RUE HIS DECISION! ONE NIGHT SOME EIGHTEEN YEARS LATER..."

"FATHER! I—I HAVE THE STRANGEST FEELING! THE IMPULSE TO—TO..."

"TO WHAT, SYBIL?"

"W—WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?"



TO KILL YOU,  
FATHER! TO SAP  
YOUR STRENGTH—  
TO FEED ON  
YOU!

GAAA—IT—IT'S  
TRUE. Y—YOU ARE  
A DEMON!  
Y!!!!!!!

YES, I AM! AT LAST I KNOW IT;  
I KNOW WHAT I AM NOW! I'M NOT  
HUMAN OR MORTAL! HEE-HEE-  
HEE—I FEED ON YOU  
MORTALS!

“THAT NIGHT SHE LEFT THE BLACK  
FOREST, NEVER TO RETURN...”

I SEE IT ALL NOW! I UNDERSTAND  
SO MUCH! I AM IMMORTAL AND  
DEDICATED TO EVIL! AND I'M  
POWERFUL—SO POWERFUL!

AS THE LIEUTENANT FINISHES THE  
FIRST PART OF THE MANUSCRIPT...

WEIRDIE, HEY?  
BUT I GOT A  
HUNCH THIS  
POWERS KNEW  
WHAT HE WAS  
TALKING ABOUT!

THAT'S MORE THAN  
I DO! DEMONS  
AND STUFF!  
WHEW!

AND HERE'S A LOT  
MORE! BROTHER,  
THIS DEMON, OR  
DAME, OR WHATEVER  
IT WAS, REALLY GOT  
AROUND! NOW SHE'S  
IN PARIS, IN THE  
LAST CENTURY!

HUH! YOU MEAN  
SHE WAS FOUR-  
HUNDRED YEARS  
OLD BY THEN?

“ALL TRACE OF SYBIL WAS LOST FOR ALMOST  
FOUR HUNDRED YEARS! THEN, IN PARIS ONE  
NIGHT...”

SO NICE OF YOU  
TO BRING ME TO  
YOUR SUMMER  
HOME, MARCEL!

YOU MUST SEE  
IT, SYBIL! AFTER  
ALL, WE ARE TO  
BE MARRIED!

"BUT SYBIL HAD BEEN LONG WITHOUT A VICTIM! SHE WAS PALE, WEAK, AND NEEDED TO REPLENISH HER STRENGTH..."

DARLING, YOU LOOK SO STRANGE! IS ANYTHING WRONG?

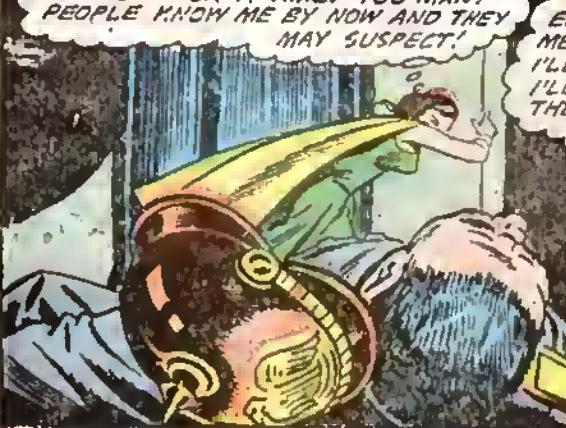
I'M WEAK, MARCEL. SO AWFULLY WEAK! BUT I—I CAN FIX THAT...

LIKE THIS—  
ARRGGGGGG—  
SYBIL! WHAT—  
AHHHHHHH—



"SHE DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT AGAIN, UNTIL IN BERLIN IN 1910..."

HO-HO! THE COUSIN OF THE KAISER HIMSELF! BUT I'LL HAVE TO LIE LOW FOR A TIME! TOO MANY PEOPLE KNOW ME BY NOW AND THEY MAY SUSPECT!



"PROBABLY SHE THOUGHT SOMETHING LIKE THIS..."

EUROPE IS NO LONGER FOR ME! MUCH TOO DANGEROUS! I'LL GO TO THE UNITED STATES! I'LL BE SAFE THERE AND THERE WILL BE PLENTY OF VICTIMS!



"SO IT WAS, TONIGHT, THAT I MET SYBIL! IT WAS AT A PARTY, AND FROM THE VERY FIRST I SENSED A STRANGE EVIL ABOUT HER..."

SOMETHING VAGUELY FAMILIAR ABOUT THIS WOMAN! ALMOST AS IF I'D SEEN HER BEFORE!

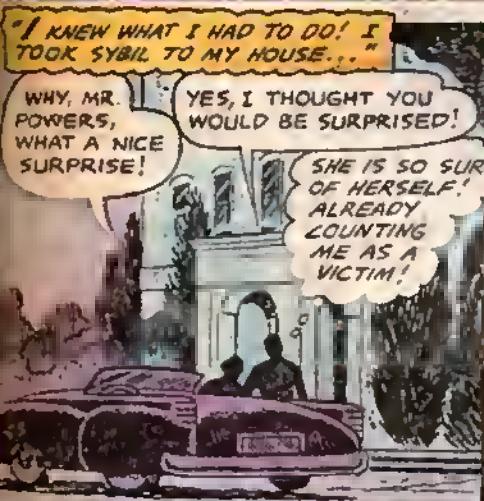
NICE OF YOU TO DRIVE ME HOME, MR. POWERS! THANKS SO MUCH!

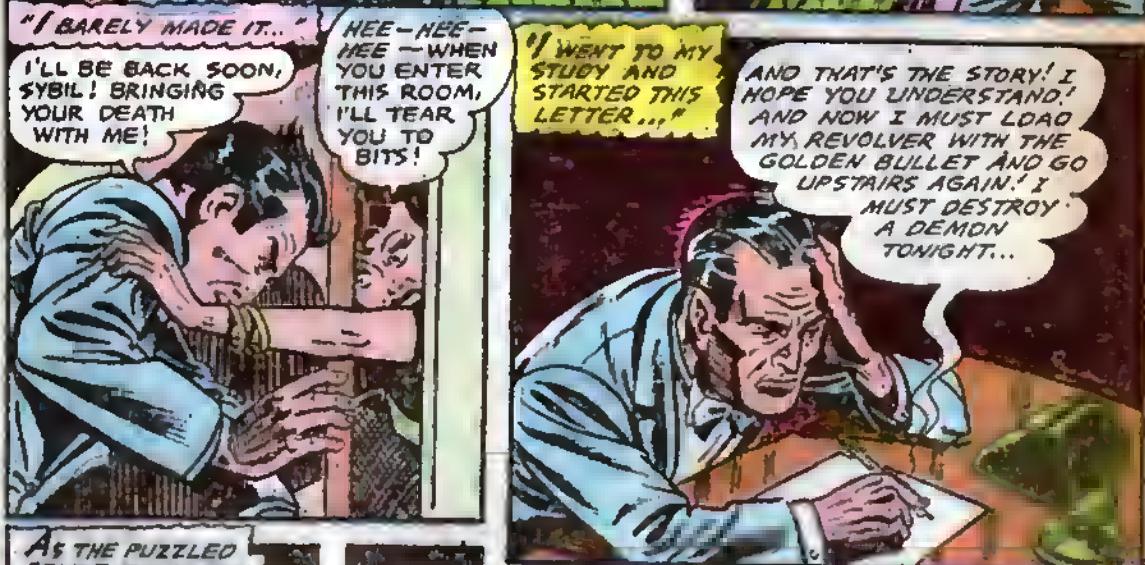
"IN THE CAR I SAW IT—AND KNEW! A GUST OF WIND IN HER HAIR EXPOSED THE BLACK STAR..."

WHY DO YOU STARE, MR. POWERS?

NOTHING! JUST THAT...

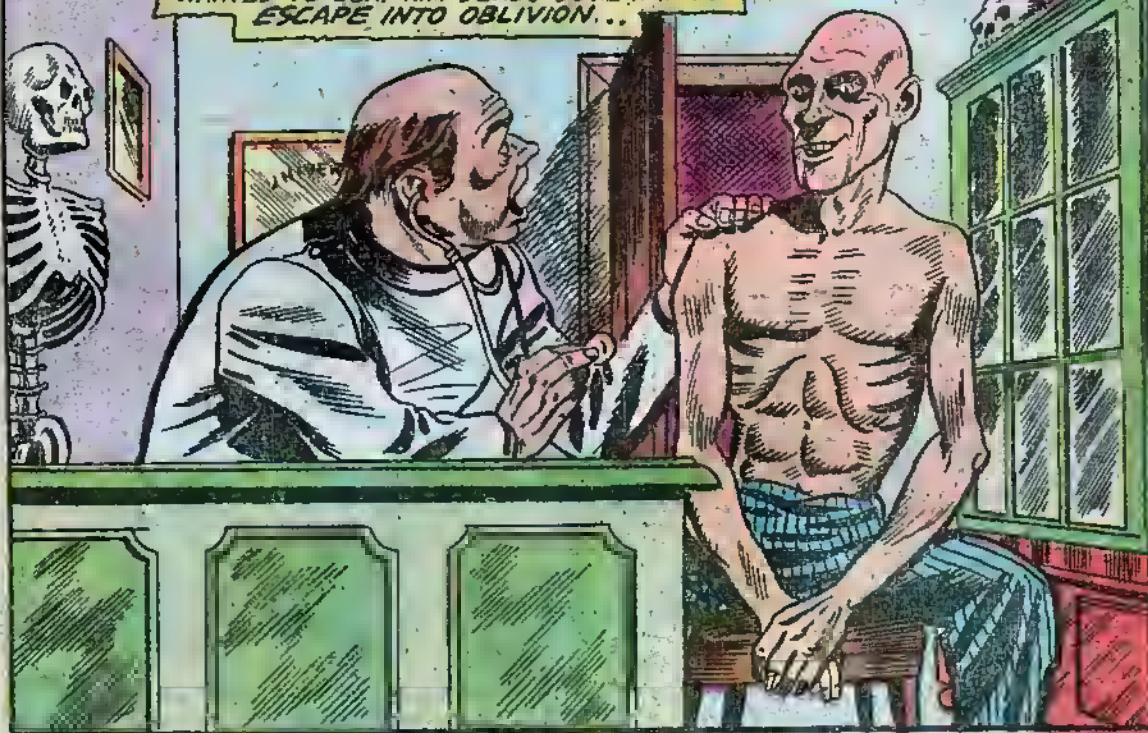
IT'S SHE! SYBIL GOTTFRIED! I'VE SEEN THE FACE IN OLD BOOKS ON WITCHCRAFT AND DEMONOLOGY! I'M SURE!





# Happily Dead!

HARRY BATES WENT TO HIS DOCTOR AND THEN HEARD THE PETRIFYING NEWS — HE WAS DEAD! NO ONE, IT SEEMED, HAD BOthered TO TELL HIM BEFORE! AND NOW THEY ALL WANTED TO BURY HIM DEAD! SO HE HAD TO ESCAPE INTO OBLIVION...

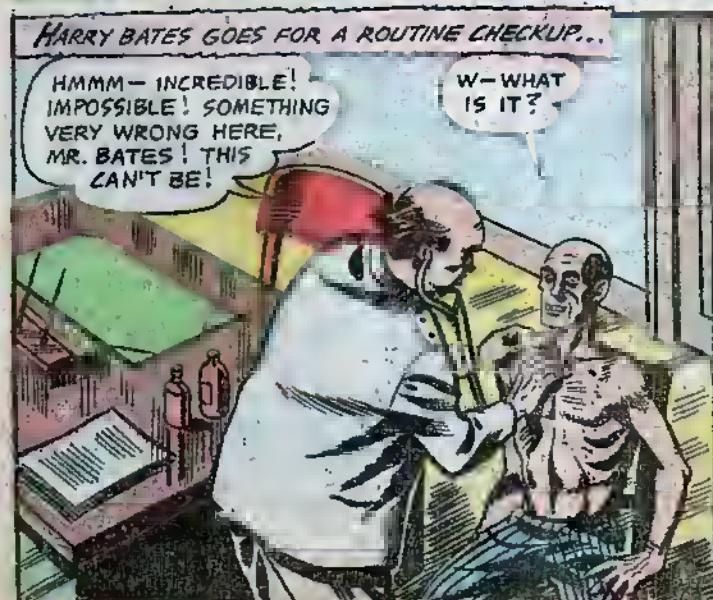


HARRY BATES GOES FOR A ROUTINE CHECKUP...

HMM — INCREDIBLE! IMPOSSIBLE! SOMETHING VERY WRONG HERE, MR. BATES! THIS CAN'T BE!

W — WHAT IS IT?

INCREDIBLE AS IT SEEMS, SIR, YOU ARE DEAD! YOU'RE ICY, COLD, NO HEARTBEAT OR PULSE, NO RESPIRATION! YOU'RE AS DEAD AS THEY COME!



DEAD?  
ARE YOU  
CRAZY?



MYSTERIES



HARRY BATES GOES TO A NEW TOWN AND BEGINS A NEW LIFE—OR A NEW DEATH! BUT FROM THE FIRST HE HAS TROUBLE KEEPING A JOB...

THERE GOES OLD ICY PAW! I BET HE'S THROUGH!

THEY ALL LAUGH AT ME!

BRRR—GOOD THING! HE GIVES ME THE CREEPS!



AND SURE ENOUGH...

I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS, BATES, BUT I'LL HAVE TO LET YOU GO! YOU, WELL, YOU ARE A LITTLE PECULIAR, YOU KNOW! THERE HAVE BEEN COMPLAINTS...

I KNOW, SIR! PEOPLE D-DON'T LIKE TO BE NEAR ME!



THAT'S ABOUT IT, BATES! I'M SORRY! I THINK YOU'D BETTER TRY FOR A JOB WHERE YOU WON'T COME IN CONTACT WITH MANY PEOPLE!

THANKS! I'LL DO THAT!



UGH! I SEE WHAT THEY MEAN! HIS HAND, LIKE A COLD WET FISH!

HAH—IF HE ONLY KNEW THAT I'M DEAD!



IN HIS DESPAIR HE TAKES A WALK THAT NIGHT, NEAR AN APPROPRIATE SPOT...

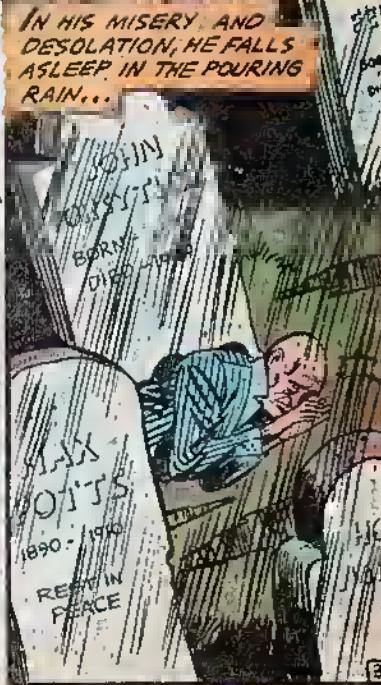
A GRAVEYARD! WHERE I BELONG! WHY DID THIS HAPPEN TO ME?



I'LL JUST GO IN AND SEE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE REALLY DEAD! NOT HALF-WAY! M-MAYBE I SHOULD JUST DIG MYSELF A GRAVE AND FILL INTO IT!



IN HIS MISERY AND DESOLATION, HE FALLS ASLEEP IN THE POURING RAIN...





BUT AGAIN HE ESCAPES AND GOES TO STILL ANOTHER TOWN! HERE THINGS GO BETTER...

AT LAST I'VE GOT JUST THE JOB FOR ME! NO ONE — (CHUCKLE) — EVER COMPLAINS ABOUT MY COLDNESS, AT LEAST!



HE WORKS IN AN ICE PLANT...

THEY ALL THINK I'M A BIT PECULIAR, BUT THEY CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY!

HO — WHAT I COULD TELL THEM!

ICE PLANT

EMPLOYEE TRANCE



HIS FELLOW WORKERS NEVER WERE PUZZLED... SAW ANYTHING

LOOK, BATES LIKE IT! COLD IS WORKING DOESN'T IN THERE IN BOTHER ONLY HIS STREET CLOTHES!

SOME SORT OF IMMUNITY!

COLD ROOM DANGER!



AND EVEN BETTER — HARRY FINDS HIMSELF A GIRL...

HELLO, ANGELA! HOW ABOUT A NICE DINNER AND THEN A DRIVE IN THE COUNTRY?

OH, I'D LOVE THAT, HARRY! YOU'RE SO SWEET!



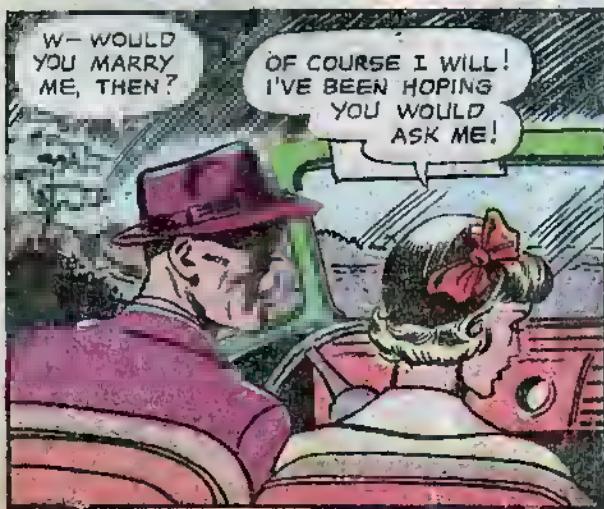
LATER...

ANGELA, I — THAT IS, DON'T YOU EVER THINK I'M A LITTLE PECULIAR? PECULIAR? FUNNY? OF COURSE NOT! I THINK YOU'RE A DARLING!



W — WOULD YOU MARRY ME, THEN?

OF COURSE I WILL! I'VE BEEN HOPING YOU WOULD ASK ME!



THAT NIGHT HARRY BATES IS PUZZLED...

HMM — IT IS STRANGE! ANGELA PROMISED TO MARRY ME — AND SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO DOESN'T SEEM TO NOTICE THAT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT ME — THAT I'M DEAD!



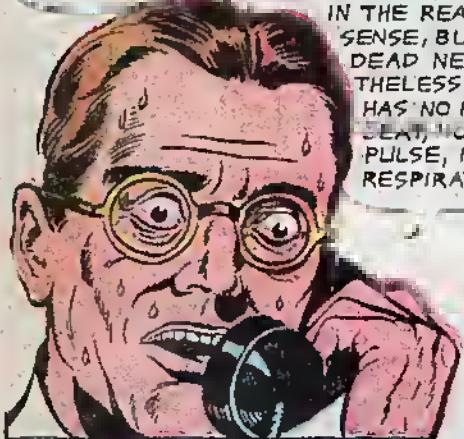
SO THEY GOT MARRIED! NOT LONG AFTERWARD...

WONDER WHO THAT COULD BE? ANGELA HAS GONE TO THE DOCTOR—BUT SHE MIGHT BE CALLING ABOUT SOMETHING!



YES, AN INCREDIBLE THING! I, ER, THAT IS — YOUR WIFE IS DEAD! NO, NOT.

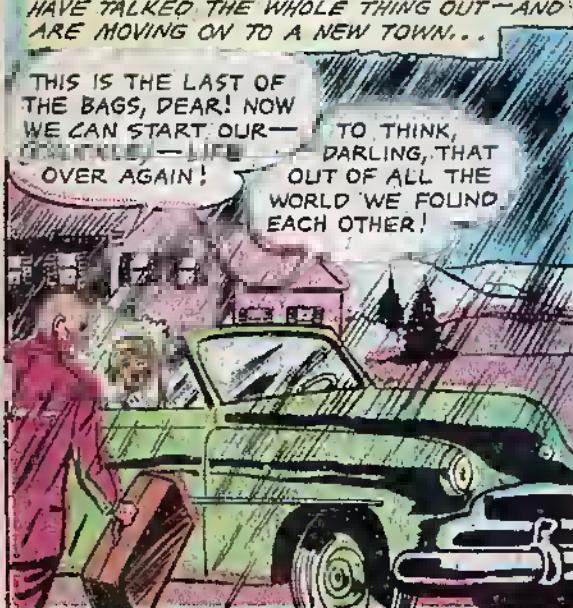
IN THE REAL SENSE, BUT DEAD NEVER-THELESS! SHE HAS NO HEART-SOUND, NO PULSE, NO RESPIRATION!



LATER, AS HARRY MEETS HIS WIFE! THEY HAVE TALKED THE WHOLE THING OUT—AND ARE MOVING ON TO A NEW TOWN...

THIS IS THE LAST OF THE BAGS, DEAR! NOW WE CAN START OUR—

TO THINK, DARLING, THAT OUT OF ALL THE WORLD WE FOUND EACH OTHER!



BUT THE DOCTOR IS ON THE PHONE...

MR. BATES? I MUST SEE YOU AT ONCE! A MOST EXTRAORDINARY THING — I WAS EXAMINING YOUR WIFE, AND...

IS — IS ANYTHING WRONG WITH MY WIFE?



A STRANGE SMILE FLITS ACROSS THE FACE OF HARRY BATES...

THANK YOU, DOC! THANK YOU VERY MUCH! SUCH GOOD NEWS! AND IT EXPLAINS — EVERYTHING! WHY SHE DIDN'T THINK I WAS PECULIAR!



YES, THE TWO PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO ARE WALKING AROUND — DEAD!

DARLING! WHO CARES? WE HAVE EACH OTHER—AND WE'LL DIE HAPPILY EVER AFTER!



The End

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